

The McGill Daily

March 29, 1999
Volume 88 Issue 65
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Activist Front Divided

THOUSANDS RALLY FOR EDUCATION
IN TWO SEPARATE MOBILIZATIONS

BY JON BRICKER

Dissension in the ranks of student activism was an unexpected but prevailing theme at a rally last Wednesday, that saw 10,000 marchers in a united front across the province mobilized in the name of reinvestment in education.

The troops gathered in Montreal and Quebec City under the umbrellas of the SSMU, La FEUQ (Fédération étudiants universitaires Québec), and CEMM (Coalition étudiant Montréal-métropolitain), with the hope of sending a message to federal and provincial coffer-holders and policy-makers.

But they were met by anti-demonstrators from Concordia and the Quebec wing of the Canadian Federation of Students. The anti-demonstrators were determined to tell the protesters that the rally was misguided and undermined by the organizers' support for the governmental powers-that-be.

But rally coordinators were confident that they had delivered their message highlighting demands for accessibility, reinvestment, and an end to initiatives that, students say, amount to a slap in the face of Quebec's education system.

"We definitely succeeded in sending a message. Students across the province are united in the belief that education is underfunded and that this has tangible effects," said SSMU VP External Jeff Feiner, who coordinated McGill participation in the rally and spoke to the gathered thousands.

But the 200 anti-demonstrators, led by reps from the Concordia Student Society and Canadian Federation of Students,

met the estimated 7,000 students from Montreal-area institutions in front of the Millennium Scholarship Foundation downtown Office, where the SSMU, FEUQ, FECQ, and CEMM-rallied troops wound up their downtown march that stopped traffic on Montreal streets for several hours.

The very spirit of the rally was undermined by its' demands and La Fédération Étudiante Universitaire Québec's (FEUQ) role in coordinating the event, said the anti-demonstrators.

Also notable on the list of the conscientious objectors to the rally was the Concordia Student Union (CSU) which decided not to take part, although several student reps were still involved in the anti-demonstration.

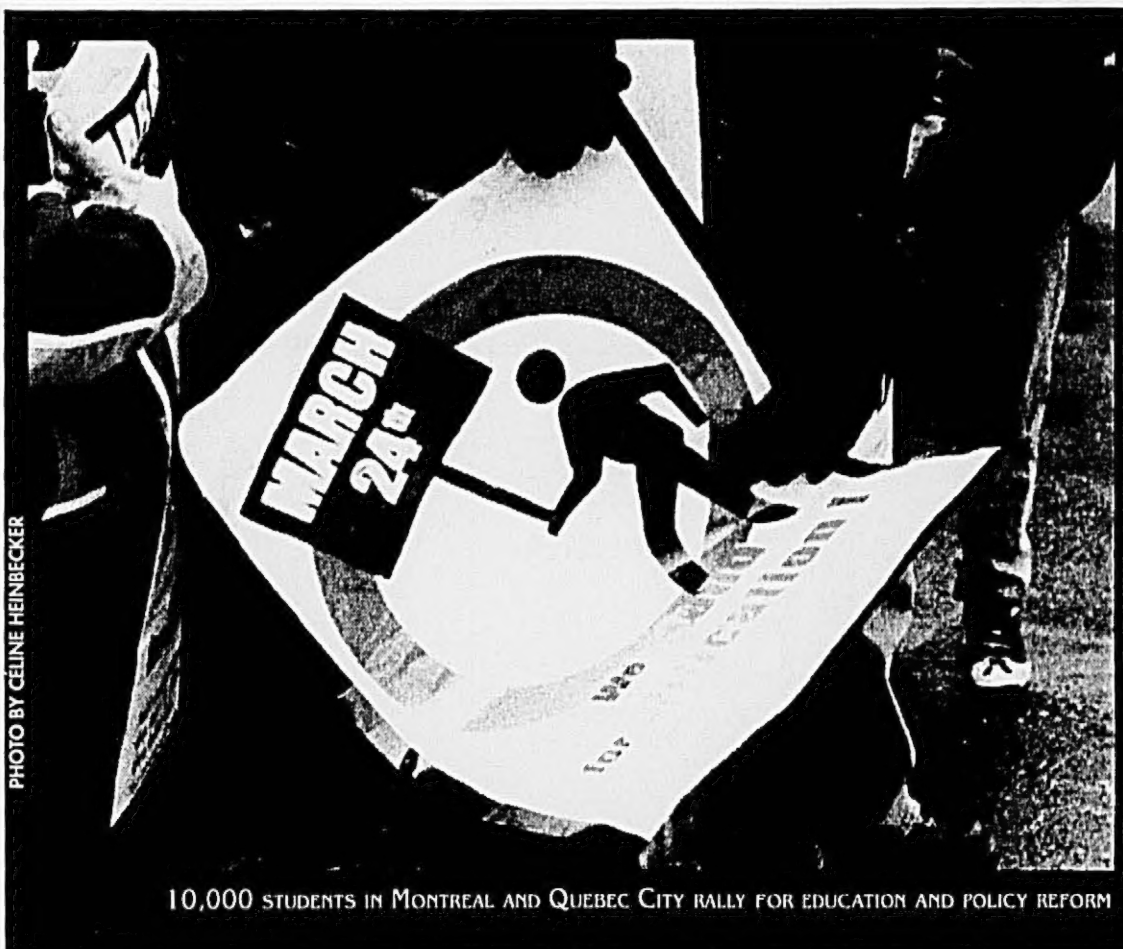
CSU President David Smaller explained CSU's decision not to participate in Wednesday's rally that was coordinated by a handful of umbrella groups including the FEUQ.

"The dominant trend in the FEUQ is something that doesn't have the greatest interests of students at heart," he said.

CSU has however pledged its support for a CFS mobilization that will go down at Concordia this coming Wednesday as part of the CFS campaign which also saw 300 students occupy five government offices and CEGEPs last Tuesday.

"We tend not to agree with the general policy of FEUQ," Smaller said, echoing CSU concerns with the larger rally. "They tend to be a little pro-government," he said questioning the scope and weight of the rally's demands in the face of FEUQ's expressed support for the PQ government and its' sovereignty push.

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10,000 STUDENTS IN MONTREAL AND QUEBEC CITY RALLY FOR EDUCATION AND POLICY REFORM

Legal Mixup Confuses AUS Referendum

BY JASON CHOW

Although students approved the Arts Student Employment Fund (ASEF) during last week's referendum, how the fund will be administered is still mired in constitutional confusion.

Shortly before Arts students were voting on the ASEF, AUS council debated the bylaws that govern the fund.

East Asian Studies Students' Society President Shaun Rein contested the legality of the proceeding and the passing of the bylaws and threatened to take the issue to the Judicial Board.

Rein contested that when the bylaws were passed at a meeting earlier this month, quorum was not held. His view was upheld by the Chief Returning Officer and an emergency meeting was held last Tuesday to vote again on the bylaws. Rein believed that quorum was to be at 42 members.

"The speaker told me that 42 was needed, the president told me 33," he said. "There's no definition of a member. There is no official number of councilors who have voting privileges."

"I don't understand how there can be a voting organ of student government without knowing how many make up that body," added Rein. "The president used the number of 33 based on who comes 'regularly' to meetings. At whose discretion? Who determines who comes 'regularly' to meetings?"

AUS President Heather Bradfield said that the speaker told her a technical mistake was made and that the bylaws, according to the rules of the constitution, were not passed.

"The speaker advised me that an error had been made and the calculation of quorum was incorrect. The bylaws had not technically been passed. On Monday,

the CRO (Chief Returning Officer) told me to call an emergency meeting and I did for Tuesday night."

The referendum motion was passed, so the question was put to the students at the polls. However, the bylaws were not passed at the meeting. The bylaws, which needed 23 votes to pass, received 22 votes for, 4 against, and 8 abstentions.

"I wanted students, before they voted, to see how the fund would be administered," said Bradfield.

Bradfield believed that the bylaws would be passed at the next meeting.

"I have a lot of difficulty believing that if I took the bylaws back to council that they would vote it down again, given obvious student support that ASEF has received," said Bradfield.

"It would be a gross violation of democracy."

(continued on page 11)

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**The
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volume 88 number 65

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The Daily is a founding member of Canadian University Press and Presse étudiante du Québec.

Printed on 20% Recycled Paper.
ISSN 1192-4608



Women in the Maquiladoras of Mexico

BY
JEFF
WEBBER

The 1965 Border Industrialization Program sparked off a new era in Mexican development strategy. The program's expressed objective was to create the infrastructural and juridical conditions necessary to entice foreign investment into the northern frontier of Mexico and, as a consequence, provide occupational opportunities for those Mexicans unemployed or underemployed, in the emerging maquiladoras. (Maquilas, as the factories are commonly labeled, generally represent the labour-intensive phase of a globalized production process, through which various parts manufactured at diverse locations are shipped to Mexico for assembly, testing, and packaging).

In effect, this meant a fundamental shift from the corporatist state structure that proved mutually beneficial for the formal labour sector (predominantly male) and the state. On the one hand, in post-revolutionary Mexico, the state garnered a measure of dependency from the unions while, at the same time, it offered the workers secure jobs and adequate wages. In turn, unions accepted these benefits and ceded a degree of control to the state.

This relationship worked in tandem with an overarching development agenda based on Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). In practice, this meant that the state took explicit action towards limiting the power of private employers. Through its promotion and subsidizing of certain industries, the market environment was distorted, and labour unions were perceived of by the state and private employers alike as an integral, legitimate representation of workers within this state/worker contract. With the implementation of the Border Industrialization Program, this ISI-inspired institutional arrangement became unraveled, and the neoliberal, export-based maquiladora industry was born.

The focus of this week's column is on a specific characteristic of this now entrenched industry, the fact that the vast majority of its employees are women. During the late 1960s and through the 1970s, over 85 percent of the workforce were female. This ratio declined to 60 percent from the 1980s to the present. Interestingly, there remains an ongoing debate amongst academics, social activists, and maquiladora workers as to whether or not the maquiladora industry has been a liberating venue for women, or an agent of capitalist oppression.

I think two things are clear: a) the industry has changed over time, and thus the experience of its women workers has been affected by these adjustments (something that many authors on all sides of the political spectrum dismiss); and b) the rather obvious conclusion (but one obscured by many analysts) that the experience of female maquiladora employees has been a mixed one.

In my view, the picture during the 1960s and the 1970s was a dim one. During this period permanence at a maquila job averaged three years. This was facilitated through the complementary policies of the state and maquiladora employers. Employers encouraged temporary employment by laying off women, encouraging them to leave voluntarily, and hiring them on a temporary rather than permanent basis. A fluid labour sector is a weak labour sector. When the occasional labour revolt did erupt during this period, the state responded with concessions to industry, and noncompliance with Mexican laws which, on paper, guaranteed compensation for laid-off workers.

Socially, culturally, and sexually, women maquiladora workers were frowned upon by society at large. They were

deemed immoral, social deviants, for leading lives unchaperoned by men. In reality, many of these women had been abandoned by their husbands (as the husbands searched for jobs across the border, an often legitimate response to a life of impoverishment, unemployment, and underemployment in Mexico). These women were often the sole providers for households with numerous children.

With the dawn of the 1980s, and throughout the 1990s we can trace some liberation for women maquiladora workers in terms of the subversion of social, cultural, and sexual norms, however, these are limited, and economic exploitation persists.

On a positive note, a new study conducted by S. Tiano of the University of New Mexico, and C. Ladino of the London School of Economics argues that due to the proliferation of dance halls catering to maquiladora workers during the 1980s and 1990s, women enjoyed an increasing freedom to associate with men without chaperons. Partially attributed to this development, women maquiladora workers in the 1990s have far more influence choosing their husbands and lovers, than did those of the 1960s and 1970s.

As Tiano and Ladino point out, "Second-generation factory workers are apparently more comfortable than their first-generation counterparts with their expanded opportunities for meeting men and their greater autonomy to engage in courtship away from the protective gaze of parents and chaperones."

However, the extent to which the maquiladora industry has been liberating for its female employees can be exaggerated easily. Recently, women's rising labour-force participation and the new discourse that stimulates it has led to a counterreaction from patriarchal agencies feeling threatened by these changes.

"Family" organizations, state agents, and church officials have begun transmitting the message that maquila workers are harming their children, and ultimately the community, by spending too much time working — despite the fact that these women's wages are imperative to the survival of households.

The most violent manifestation of this patriarchal backlash, has been a dramatic increase in the rape and murder of women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico — a city inundated with maquiladoras. According to the New York Times, "At least 70 women, many of them manufacturing workers, have been raped and murdered and their bodies dumped in the Chihuahua desert over the last five years." This is a conservative number compared to those distributed by various human rights organizations. In any case, it means women of Juárez are twice as likely to be murdered as women living in New York city. Innumerable women's groups, and human rights activists have protested inaction on the part of the state, drawing the logical conclusion that the state largely perpetuates the patriarchal backlash in society at large. For example, authorities often suggest that murdered women have invited attack by wearing mini-skirts or going out dancing.

In sum, while female maquiladora workers may have achieved some limited social gains, their economic and social subordination continues. They face harsh working conditions, almost no power to unionize, and now the backlash against the perceived subversion of traditional gender roles. Much of the empirical data available suggests these women's collective scenario remains bleak. One can only hope that recent developments in creative cross-border union organizing continues, and gains strength, despite the weak nature of labour side agreements under the

We (Still) Need a Room of our Own

BY ADIEU
CAPRIARCAT

To some people, the idea of a women's only space on campus may seem a teeny bit outdated. After all, we grew up in the 80s and dammit, we knew that we were equal to all of those boys in class. Except that we got to talk less often. And as we got older, we were told that we were still every bit as good as boys (but please, don't be smart or assertive or good at hockey, don't tell them off for the PMS comments, don't be offended when they put posters of near-naked women in their lockers and make sure you're prettier than the other girls so that you can get a boy of your very own). A few years later, we arrive on the enlightened campus of a university and...everything is the same. One would hope that a university,

which supposedly questions the ideas and values of society, would provide a space to question why half the population is taught that they are less (pick one or more) intelligent, capable, talented, ingenious, human, than the other half. Instead we see spaces such as Gerts, events like the management winter carnival, and high rate of incidence of rape in the McGill ghetto, none of which can be said to reflect the "women and men are equal" ideal. Women need a space build solidarity, not in the least to organize some form of resistance against events and institutions on campus that degrade them. If we no longer need our own space, it is because we are no longer oppressed, which is not the case.

The idea that women aren't

treated as equals, despite their making up half the population, is old news. Why then, are we constantly being asked to explain our need for space to meet, organize and discuss on our own? In order for women to organize against oppression, we have to be able to discuss freely, and we are much more likely to feel comfortable doing that if men are not present.

If we don't need the space to explain our position to men, then why do we need it? Historically, the women's union has been a place to organize women-positive events and services, like Walksafe, SACOMSS, a post-abortion support group, as well as a meeting place for discussion groups, such as the queer McGill groups. It is also an area for ac-

tivism, where women can do things in ways that differ from those of mainstream culture. It is also a space for women to hang out with other women, to learn to function collectively after being taught that we should compete with each other, and to read books which we would not have access to through other libraries (books on women's health, feminist literature and newsletters, etc.). As long as any women are using the space to share ideas and organize woman-positive actions and events, the space is needed. As long as women feel that they are not treated as equals, we need resources to change this. When all women know they are being treated as equals, we will say so, and only then, not before, will the space be outdated.



More Talk on How to Green McGill

PANEL DISCUSSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY LEADS TO MUCH TALK, LITTLE ACTION

BY LOUISE
ADDARIO-BESSY

The number of signees on the petition for a "Green McGill" continues to grow — the tally is currently over 2500 signatures. There is a growing concern on campus about McGill's deficiencies in the area of environmental awareness. At last week, the Campus Committee for Environmental Action (CCEA) took a step forward.

Last Wednesday, CCEA sponsored a roundtable discussion between some of the people who will be most affected by — and those who will be most responsible for — any changes that are made. The discussion was open to the public, with about 30 people in attendance.

Rocky Lipton, co-coordinator of the CCEA and organizer of the event, was happy with the turnout.

"It was a good crowd," Lipton said. "I was pleased."

The event, which was moderated by McGill's School of the Environment Director Peter Brown,

also featured Robert Savoie, Executive Director of the Department of Human Resources, Claude Labaie, head of Waste Management McGill, Jim Nicoll, Undergraduate Programs Coordinator for the Department of Civil Engineering, and David Smaller, President of the Concordia Student Union.

The roundtable was originally formatted around three questions, each was to be put to the members, one of whom would give an initial response, after which the issue would be debated by all.

The event set out to address three questions:

1. What is sustainability's impact on the environment?
2. Do we have a moral obligation to prepare students to implement sustainable practices?
3. What are some of the problems which can face a university when implementing an environmental policy?

Ultimately, only the first question was addressed, though the

discussion revealed stances on the other questions as well.

"The first half of the panel discussion was spent covering specific issues relevant to McGill's impact on the environment ... how much paper and chemicals are used [at McGill], etcetera," explained Smaller.

Savoie said he was pleased with the event and that it served a useful purpose. "I got a better understanding of where the students want ... to go. I learned about the Green Plan, which I was not aware of."

"Once it opened up into a wider discussion, it was really interesting. We started talking about the role of [McGill] university," Smaller said, adding that he enjoyed hearing stances on where McGill stands today.

But Smaller's assessment of McGill was less than positive. "It's a tragedy when it comes to environmental protection," he said. "I was shocked to learn that McGill doesn't have an environ-

ment policy."

"I thought [1993] was late," Smaller said of Concordia's implementation of a comprehensive environmental policy six years ago.

Although there was some anticipation that the debate would grow heated, given controversy and heated feelings which have surrounded the topic on campus recently, the concern was not realized.

"It was very diplomatic," Lipton said. "It never got heated at any point."

Savoie, the roundtable member in the most influential position with respect to the McGill administration, spoke just as highly of how all parties carried themselves.

"The debate allowed everyone to clarify the issues, and discuss who has [ultimate] responsibility for taking care of the environment. The discussion went in quite a number of directions."

The most important part

of ameliorating McGill's green stance, Savoie says, is increasing awareness of the campaign in the upper echelons of McGill administration. "I don't think the senior administration is fully aware that there is a Green Plan," he said. "The CCEA should probably try to meet with the senior administration and inform them that there is a Green Plan."

But while the roundtable was considered an important step toward increasing public awareness of the issue and understanding on the parts of all parties, the fact that policy reform must be initiated by McGill Senate, and not the debaters, rendered it doubtful that the forum will affect any policy changes.

Smaller further worried that the event didn't go far in terms of changing many attitudes. "[The debate] was respectful of everyone's ideas, [but] I don't think anyone changed their minds afterwards," he said.

Spiegelman rallies against Holokitsch

MAUS CREATOR DISCUSSES BENIGNI, CONFRONTS GADFLY IN MCGILL LECTURE

BY BEN ERRETT

Security was present and Leacock 132 was filled to capacity last Wednesday as the Hillel Jewish Student Centre presented Art Spiegelman in a lecture on *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. Maus, his Pulitzer Prize-winning master work, recounts his search to understand his father's experience in Auschwitz.

The evening got off to a raucous start with a vocal audience member interrupting student David Grossman's introduction of the author. The gadfly ranted about Maus being racist, and Spiegelman took the mike to confront him.

"The issue of racism is central to Maus, but I don't think dealing with the issue makes you a racist."

The chain-smoking author seamlessly began his talk with a discussion of Roberto Benigni's tragicomedy, *Life is Beautiful*. Spiegelman was approached by Miramax Films to design a poster for the award-winning film, but declined after a private screening of the film. This was even after he was told that Maus inspired the work.

"I was really perturbed by this movie ... I wasn't upset by the fact that this was a comedy. I mean, that's not in and of itself an impossible thing, though it'd have to be so funny you'd scream in pain. ... I fear that Maus paved the way for turning mass extermination into mass entertainment."

Spiegelman was particularly offended by a recent newspaper story about a Holocaust museum in St. Petersburg, Florida that offers a miniature Polish box car as a gift to all visitors who donate thirty nine dollars or more.

"Something's wrong, and I don't really know to what degree Maus has contributed to that...It's Holokitsch, using these events for sentimental effect. Maus takes a certain risk, using metaphor [of Nazis and Jews as cats and mice] to get at something very hard to get at otherwise. Benigni uses the Holocaust itself as a metaphor for a big bummer. Even if you're in-

volved in a really big bummer, as long as you have a song in your heart, everything will be okay."

Spiegelman then moved to a discussion of how he constructed Maus. The artist's parents came to America after surviving Auschwitz, and his mother committed suicide when he was in his teens. Maus tells the story of how he came to write the comic itself: his interviews with his father juxtaposed with depictions of the horrors of Auschwitz. Spiegelman's depictions of all of

collaborator....Swine and rats are both animals on a farm, but swine are useful. The Nazis used the Poles, but they tried to exterminate the Jews."

Spiegelman admitted that the book may have been over-praised by critics unaccustomed to reviewing comics. However, he resisted attempts by some to pick a new name for his genre.

"I've heard the word 'tragic' used, but I think that's too limiting....Barnes&Noble got really excited and tried to start a 'graphic novel' section, but the only other graphic novel back in the late eighties was Dark Night.

"I looked comic up in the dictionary, and the definition (next to an example from Nancy) was a 'narrative series of pictures.' Then I looked up narrative and found that it meant story. Story led me to history, which comes from the medieval Latin for pictures in a church window. And that's essentially what Maus is. It has a solid architectural form and it is composed of pictures in windows."

Spiegelman went on to explain why the all of the

mouse characters have such nondescript faces.

"Anyone who's ever read Little Orphan Annie will remember the blank eyes everyone had. They're just big blank ovals. All of the emotion has to be projected by the reader...The faces of the mice give the distance necessary to move towards accuracy."

Spiegelman received a prolonged standing ovation from the audience, and stayed behind for more than two hours signing books, illustrating each one with the title character. Art Spiegelman's public lectures are rare, and they are a must for anyone looking for insight into an artist's mind.



SPIEGELMAN AT LEACOCK LAST WEDNESDAY

the characters as animals is perhaps what the comic is most widely known for, and the cause of much of the controversy around the book. The heckler at the lecture seemed to be irate at the artist's depiction of the Polish as pigs. Spiegelman noted that, though the book has been translated into a multitude of languages, there is still no Polish edition. However, he defended his use of pigs and explained his reasons for using animals in general.

"The Jews were exterminated like animals, and Zyklon B was a pesticide used to kill vermin. The Nazis knew it was important to dehumanize the enemy, so in a sense, Hitler's my

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• The CHESTER MACNAGHTEN PRIZES IN CREATIVE WRITING (two prizes, one of \$500 and another of \$350) are open to undergraduate students of the university for the best piece of creative writing in English, i.e. a story, a play, a poem, an essay, etc. Printed compositions are ineligible if they have been published before April 15, 1999.

• The PETERSON MEMORIAL PRIZE, worth \$1,500, is open to undergraduate or graduate students registered in a degree program in the Department of English.

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We (Still) Need a Room of our Own

BY ADIEU
CAPRIARCAT

To some people, the idea of a women's only space on campus may seem a teeny bit outdated. After all, we grew up in the 80s and dammit, we knew that we were equal to all of those boys in class. Except that we got to talk less often. And as we got older, we were told that we were still every bit as good as boys (but please, don't be smart or assertive or good at hockey, don't tell them off for the PMS comments, don't be offended when they put posters of near-naked women in their lockers and make sure you're prettier than the other girls so that you can get a boy of your very own). A few years later, we arrive on the enlightened campus of a university and...everything is the same. One would hope that a university,

which supposedly questions the ideas and values of society, would provide a space to question why half the population is taught that they are less (pick one or more) intelligent, capable, talented, ingenious, human, than the other half. Instead we see spaces such as Gerts, events like the management winter carnival, and high rate of incidence of rape in the McGill ghetto, none of which can be said to reflect the "women and men are equal" ideal. Women need a space build solidarity, not in the least to organize some form of resistance against events and institutions on campus that degrade them. If we no longer need our own space, it is because we are no longer oppressed, which is not the case.

The idea that women aren't

treated as equals, despite their making up half the population, is old news. Why then, are we constantly being asked to explain our need for space to meet, organize and discuss on our own? In order for women to organize against oppression, we have to be able to discuss freely, and we are much more likely to feel comfortable doing that if men are not present.

If we don't need the space to explain our position to men, then why do we need it? Historically, the women's union has been a place to organize women-positive events and services, like Walksafe, SACOMSS, a post-abortion support group, as well as a meeting place for discussion groups, such as the queer McGill groups. It is also an area for ac-

tivism, where women can do things in ways that differ from those of mainstream culture. It is also a space for women to hang out with other women, to learn to function collectively after being taught that we should compete with each other, and to read books which we would not have access to through other libraries (books on women's health, feminist literature and newsletters, etc.). As long as any women are using the space to share ideas and organize woman-positive actions and events, the space is needed. As long as women feel that they are not treated as equals, we need resources to change this. When all women know they are being treated as equals, we will say so, and only then, not before, will the space be outdated.

More Talk on How to Green McGill

PANEL DISCUSSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY LEADS TO MUCH TALK, LITTLE ACTION

BY LOUGI
ADDARIO-BERRY

The number of signees on the petition for a "Green McGill" continues to grow — the tally is currently over 2500 signatures. There is a growing concern on campus about McGill's deficiencies in the arena of environmental awareness. But last week, the Campus Committee for Environmental Action (CCEA) took a step forward.

Last Wednesday, CCEA sponsored a roundtable discussion between some of the people who will be most affected by — and those who will be most responsible for — any changes that are made. The discussion was open to the public, with about 30 people in attendance.

Becky Lipton, co-coordinator of the CCEA and organizer of the event was happy with the turnout.

"It was a good crowd," Lipton said. "I was pleased."

The event, which was moderated by McGill's School of the Environment Director Peter Brown,

also featured Robert Savoie, Executive Director of the Department of Human Resources, Claude Lahaie, head of Waste Management McGill, Jim Nicell, Undergraduate Program Coordinator for the Department of Civil Engineering, and David Smaller, President of the Concordia Student Union.

The roundtable was originally formatted around three questions: each was to be put to the members, one of whom would give an initial response, after which the issue would be debated by all.

The event set out to address three questions:

1. What is a university's impact on the environment?
2. Do we have a moral obligation to prepare students to implement sustainable practices?
3. What are some of the problems which can face a university when implementing an environmental policy?

Ultimately, only the first question was addressed, though the

discussion revealed stances on the other questions as well.

"The first half of the panel discussion was spent covering specific issues relevant to McGill's impact on the environment ... how much paper and chemicals are used [at McGill], etcetera," explained Smaller.

Savoie said he was pleased with the event and that it served a useful purpose. "I got a better understanding of where the students want ... to go. I learned about the Green Plan, which I was not aware of."

"Once it opened up into a wider discussion, it was really interesting. We started talking about the role of [McGill] university," Smaller said, adding that he enjoyed hearing stances on where McGill stands today.

But Smaller's assessment of McGill was less than positive. "It's a troglodyte when it comes to environmental protection," he said. "I was shocked to learn that McGill doesn't have an environ-

ment policy."

"I thought [1993] was late," Smaller said of Concordia's implementation of a comprehensive environmental policy six years ago.

Although there was some anticipation that the debate would grow heated, given controversy and heated feelings which have surrounded the topic on campus recently, the concern was not realized.

"It was very diplomatic," Lipton said. "It never got heated at any point."

Savoie, the roundtable member in the most influential position with respect to the McGill administration, was spoke just as highly of how all parties carried themselves.

"The debate allowed everyone to clarify the issues, and discuss who has [ultimate] responsibility for taking care of the environment. The discussion went in quite a number of directions."

The most important part

of ameliorating McGill's green stance, Savoie says, is increasing awareness of the campaign in the upper echelons of McGill administration. "I don't think the senior administration is fully aware that there is a Green Plan," he said. "The CCEA should probably try to meet with the senior administration and inform them that there is a Green Plan."

But while the roundtable was considered an important step toward increasing public awareness of the issue and understanding on the parts of all parties, the fact that policy reform must be initiated by McGill Senate, and not the debaters, rendered it doubtful that the forum will affect any policy changes.

Smaller further worried that the event didn't go far in terms of changing many attitudes. "[The debate] was respectful of everyone's ideas, [but] I don't think anyone changed their minds afterwards," he said.

Spiegelman rallies against Holokitsch

MAUS CREATOR DISCUSSES BENIGNI, CONFRONTS GADFLY IN MCGILL LECTURE

BY BEN ERRETT

Security was present and Leacock 132 was filled to capacity last Wednesday as the Hillel Jewish Student Centre presented Art Spiegelman in a lecture on *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. *Maus*, his Pulitzer Prize-winning master work, recounts his search to understand his father's experience in Auschwitz.

The evening got off to a raucous start with a vocal audience member interrupting student David Grossman's introduction of the author. The gadfly ranted about *Maus* being racist, and Spiegelman took the mike to confront him.

"The issue of racism is central to *Maus*, but I don't think dealing with the issue makes you a racist."

The chain-smoking author seamlessly began his talk with a discussion of Roberto Benigni's tragicomedy, *Life is Beautiful*. Spiegelman was approached by Miramax Films to design a poster for the award-winning film, but declined after a private screening of the film. This was even after he was told that *Maus* inspired the work.

"I was really perturbed by this movie ... I wasn't upset by the fact that this was a comedy. I mean, that's not in and of itself an impossible thing, though it'd have to be so funny you'd scream in pain. ... I fear that *Maus* paved the way for turning mass extermination into mass entertainment."

Spiegelman was particularly offended by a recent newspaper story about a Holocaust museum in St. Petersburg, Florida that offers a miniature Polish box car as a gift to all visitors who donate thirty nine dollars or more.

"Something's wrong, and I don't really know to what degree *Maus* has contributed to that...It's Holokitsch, using these events for sentimental effect. *Maus* takes a certain risk, using metaphor [of Nazis and Jews as cats and mice] to get at something very hard to get at otherwise. Benigni uses the Holocaust itself as a metaphor for a big bummer. Even if you're in-

volved in a really big bummer, as long as you have a song in your heart, everything will be okay."

Spiegelman then moved to a discussion of how he constructed *Maus*. The artist's parents came to America after surviving Auschwitz, and his mother committed suicide when he was in his teens. *Maus* tells the story of how he came to write the comic itself: his interviews with his father juxtaposed with depictions of the horrors of Auschwitz. Spiegelman's depictions of all of

collaborator....Swine and rats are both animals on a farm, but swine are useful. The Nazis used the Poles, but they tried to exterminate the Jews."

Spiegelman admitted that the book may have been over-praised by critics unaccustomed to reviewing comics. However, he resisted attempts by some to pick a new name for his genre.

"I've heard the word 'tragic' used, but I think that's too limiting....Barnes&Noble got really excited and tried to start a

'graphic novel' section, but the only other graphic novel back in the late eighties was *Dark Night*.

"I looked comic up in the dictionary, and the definition (next to an example from Nancy) was a 'narrative series of pictures.' Then I looked up narrative and found that it meant story. Story led me to history, which comes from the medieval Latin for pictures in a church window. And that's essentially what *Maus* is. It has a solid architectural form and it is composed of pictures in windows."

Spiegelman went on to explain why the all of the

the characters as animals is perhaps what the comic is most widely known for, and the cause of much of the controversy around the book. The heckler at the lecture seemed to be irate at the artist's depiction of the Polish as pigs. Spiegelman noted that, though the book has been translated into a multitude of languages, there is still no Polish edition. However, he defended his use of pigs and explained his reasons for using animals in general.

"The Jews were exterminated like animals, and Zyklon B was a pesticide used to kill vermin. The Nazis knew it was important to dehumanize the enemy, so in a sense, Hitler's my

mouse characters have such non-descript faces.

"Anyone who's ever read *Little Orphan Annie* will remember the blank eyes everyone had. They're just big blank ovals. All of the emotion has to be projected by the reader...The faces of the mice give the distance necessary to move towards accuracy."

Spiegelman received a prolonged standing ovation from the audience, and stayed behind for more than two hours signing books, illustrating each one with the title character. Art Spiegelman's public lectures are rare, and they are a must for anyone looking for insight into an artist's mind.



SPIEGELMAN AT LEACOCK LAST WEDNESDAY

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Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery

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Creative Writing

• The MONA ADILMAN PRIZE IN POETRY, worth \$650—or \$325 for two students, is open to undergraduate or graduate students registered in the Faculty of Arts for the best poem or group of poems relating to ecological or environmental concerns.

• The CLARK LEWIS MEMORIAL PRIZE, worth \$250, is open to major or honours students in the Department of English. The prize is awarded annually or from time to time for original plays staged in the course of the academic year.

• The CHESTER MACNAGHTEN PRIZES IN CREATIVE WRITING (two prizes, one of \$500 and another of \$350) are open to undergraduate students of the university for the best piece of creative writing in English, i.e. a story, a play, a poem, an essay, etc. Printed compositions are ineligible if they have been published before April 15, 1999.

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Is This a McGill Français?

ONE IN FIVE STUDENTS ARE FRANCOPHONES, BUT
YOU'D HARDLY KNOW IT

BY REBECCA ROSENBLUM

All the signs are in both languages, but when you get in the door, it may be hard to find someone able or willing to speak French to you. McGill authorities state that any student can submit any paper or exam in French, but the marker may not have sufficient knowledge of the language to grade it fairly. The student council reps make an effort to campaign to both franco and anglo students, but handbooks, frosh activities and most clubs and services are almost exclusively in English. Welcome to the second largest French city in the world - welcome to McGill.

Standing at 20.3% of the total population of the University, 6020 students roaming the campus everyday are francophone, according to Mme Ginette Lamontagne, General Director of Governmental and Institutional Affairs at McGill.

Of these French students, many are here to learn English and generally to use the school as "an open door into English Canada and the whole world, through the eyeglasses of anglophones," according to Francophone Commissioner Louis Philippe Messier. But students that don't assimilate into the dominant English language and culture usually give up on McGill as a social centre.

Un école = A school

"(Our) institution is the anglophone university which gives the lowest number of courses in French in all [of] Canada!" commented McGill student Sylvain Larocque. And the number is decreasing. At last Thursday's symposium titled "McGill Français: 30 Years After," Director of the

Quebec Studies program Alain Gagnon mourned the loss of courses offered in French, which he said offer a door into McGill for French students.

Larocque explains that French courses are often eliminated when merged with similar ones offered in English. As an example, he points to the fact that even Teaching French as a Second Language courses in his own program are now taught in English.

While it is true that McGill is primarily an anglophone institution and the majority of courses will naturally be taught in English, Larocque and others point out that the University must take the diversity of the student body into consideration. In theory, the campus-wide rule that any paper or exam may be written in English or French offers francophone students a chance to study at an English institution, even when they are still more comfortable writing in their mother tongue. In practice, there are a few hitches. For example, many professors fail to publicize this policy, so that some students don't even know such a possibility exists. Equally problematic is that some professors and markers are not sufficiently fluent in French to mark accurately.

Courses in French as a Second Language offered at McGill can pose problems as well. Though many English students come to McGill hoping to become bilingual, it may be hard for them to pursue this goal through FSL here. Many of the courses take a theoretical approach—interesting from a linguistic point of view but prob-

lematic for students hoping to learn how to get around the city in French. Furthermore, heavy workloads in these courses, coupled with the fact that there is no minor program in French, makes FSL courses impractical for students taking them as electives.

L'AEUM = the SSMU

"It's true that the Francophone community is ghettoized at McGill," said Messier, the only francophone on SSMU Council.

SSMU President Elect Andrew Tischler agreed, but explains that "there is a practical difference between people who come to McGill from within Quebec and those from outside Quebec. Those from outside the province take a four year program; students from Quebec take a three year one. In UO, out-of-province students have the opportunity to live together in rez, take all the same courses, really band together as a group. When students who have gone to CÉGEP get here in U1, they don't have the same opportunity."

Tischler and his council hope to change McGill francophones' feelings of alienation next year. "I think that...this is the first year we can make something happen...(Messier) has been very good about setting up initiatives on campus."

The simple presence of Tischler on council is a good sign for many francophone students. McGill student Julien Laplante comments that "the four

campaigns [for SSMU president] seemed basically the same - except when they spoke, Andrew Tischler was the only one speaking almost perfect French."

His ability to speak French, which Tischler picked up from school, work experience, travel and friends, makes him more accessible to French students. Although Tischler remarks that past presidents like Chris Carter and Tara Newell have worked on involvement and accessibility for francophones, it seems that his bilingual posters and unaccented French have brought these issues to the foreground.

"I'm happy that [Tischler has] been elected, since he seems to be the best person to represent our interests," said Larocque.

Despite such optimism, concrete plans have not yet surfaced, for the many access problems facing French students. Issues such as the unilingual SSMU front desk staff, and English-dominated frosh week programs and handbooks have still not been addressed.

Les étudiants = The students

"I don't think it's a question of assimilation, but what's similar between all students," said Tischler merrily. "Anglophone and francophone students want to learn about each other's culture. A lot of people are really curious about Montreal and French culture," he said.

Then again, McGill's famed apathy levels extend across language lines. "Last year, the Francophone Commissioner did nothing and no one ever noticed," Messier said. He is try-

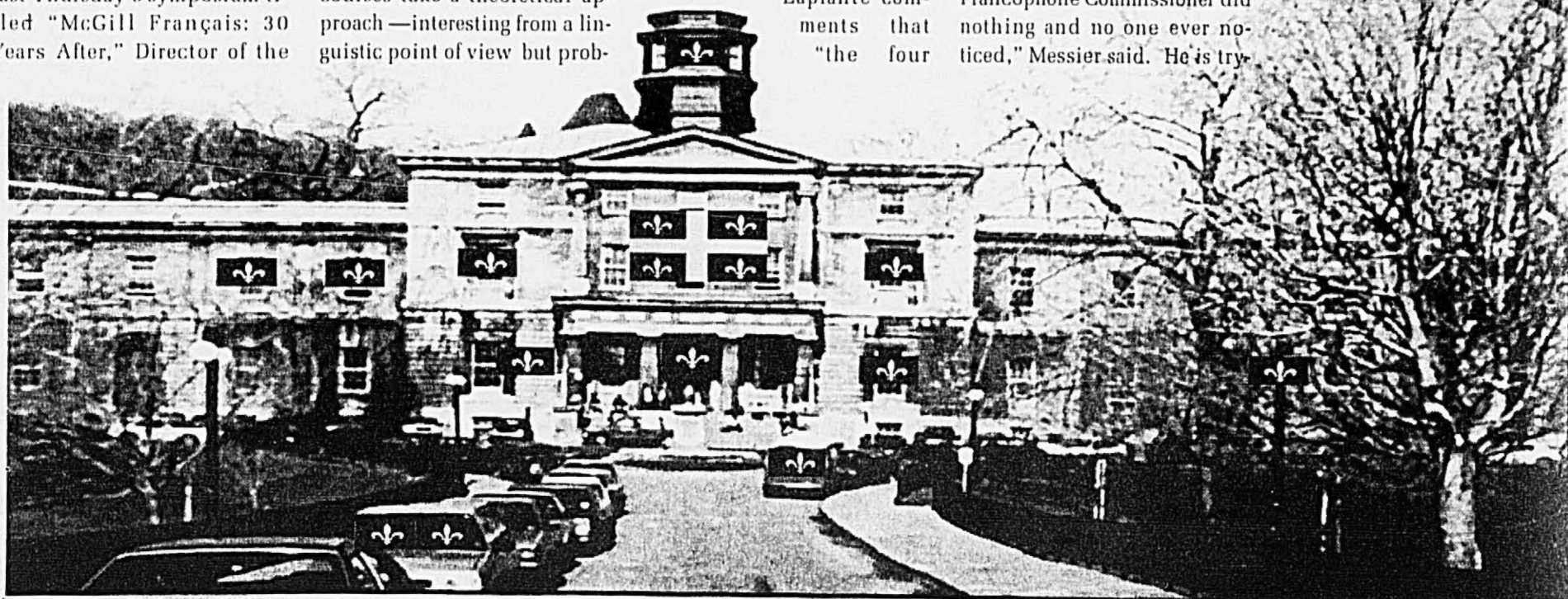
ing to work within the SSMU to create projects that will last beyond his own graduation.

"There have been francophone/francophile associations before, but usually they fall down after the guy or girl who put it up leaves. I want to put something permanent in the constitution," he said. He hopes to make the position of Francophone Commissioner more official before he leaves, so that there will definitely be someone to succeed him.

Messier believes that "French and English can live well together, work together," but added that cultural and political differences are very real. At McGill, he explained, "it is not mainly a language problem, but a cultural problem...if [anglophones] can't understand the historical references of Quebecers, it won't work."

People like Tischler, Messier and the McGill Défilé Français staff seem committed to the idea of making French culture and language a bigger presence on campus. However, political figures are only as strong as the desires of the populations that back them - if French and English students don't support and demand French on campus, there will be little progress.

"McGill could and should be more francophone, being in Montreal. But this won't happen if nobody is asking seriously for it," Larocque said.





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THE REAL THING OR GENERATION NEXT

COKE VS. PEPSI: SHOULD MCGILL BE MAKING THE CHOICE?

BY PAULINE HWANG

What would it take for you to refuse \$10 million? That's the question that the student body will soon have to consider - though most don't know it yet.

The deal in question is the Exclusive Cold Beverage Agreement currently in negotiation between the SSMU, McGill's administration, and Spectrum Marketing, a third party hired to facilitate the contract. The beverage companies to be courted are, of course, Coke and Pepsi.

Make no mistake, folks - this is a big deal. Its scope potentially covers all cold beverage sales - fountain, counter, and vending machine - over ten years and it has repercussions for the SSMU, student faculty associations, athletics, and residences. In return for signing with one of the companies, McGill will receive an estimated additional \$500,000 to \$1 million per year over the decade.

Sounds like a sweet deal, no? Sounds like we're raking in millions for doing... almost nothing. Not so fast.

Though the biggest problem may seem to be convincing students to bid a tearful farewell to either the choice of a new generation or the real thing, a glance at legal, ethical, and democratic issues faced by other universities may be enough to awaken our prudence.

All or nothing

McGill is one of the last holdouts against sweeping, long-term beverage deals. Currently, our university and student groups negotiate independent beverage deals. At least 22 other exclusivity contracts now exist between Canadian campuses and either of the beverage giants. Spectrum, which has engineered 30 Canadian university or government deals, is currently presenting the detailed proposal to McGill stakeholders, hoping to seal the deal by the semester's end.

All faculties have the ability to opt out of the agreement as it now stands, and buy-in - especially from the larger ones - is crucial. After all, Coke or Pepsi would be foolish to pay millions for an "exclusive" contract with only scattered beverage retailers across campus. The Post-Graduate Students' Society adopted a motion in January stat-

two campuses, and further divided among SSMU, faculty societies, athletics, and residence. Funds will be sliced this way to give groups incentive to sign. Aside from Shatner renovations, no real stipulation for funds is in place, leaving most of the money to the discretion of individual

groups. "Spectrum has got to be a win-win situation for everyone," said Pederzani. "We're not here to force it down anyone's throat...If they don't sign, we have no contract. It's that simple."

The Nitty-gritties: What's legal?

The immediate effect for students will appear in personal choice. Even excluding dairy and alcoholic beverages from the contract, drink selection may decrease. Pederzani said this is not a problem. "They can walk across the street. It's not as if we're in the middle of the Prairies."

The answer seems less simple at other universities. According to Chris Bodnar, of the University of Ottawa Fulcrum newspaper, "sales at many campus businesses have gone down since the deal came in. Not having the choice of Pepsi forces many students off campus for their drinks. You never realize how many other drinks there are until they're gone." He also notes other dangers such as vending machine price increases - only \$1.50 bottles are now available.

More complicated questions arise from events such as club fundraisers. For example, at Concordia University, a food exclusivity contract prevents clubs from holding bake sales.

So to what extent will this contract restrict student autonomy? Pederzani assured that such concerns will be addressed in the contract. "What I dislike the most," he said, "is [that] critics of this kind will often cite the most extreme examples of what can go wrong and claim that that

is going to be the scenario at McGill."

Students at the University of Toronto were similarly reassured by Michael Finlayson, VP Human Resources, who said, "I assume that if a party does not live up to its terms, then it is enforceable." As reported in U of T's student newspaper The Varsity, their administration plans to sign a cold beverage exclusivity deal by midsummer. Finlayson told students the deal will be pursued whatever their stance, provoking student objection en masse. According to Chris Ramsaroop, Student Administrative Council president, "the undergrads, grads, arts & science students' union, student councils, government councils have all voted against it. So we're making their life quite difficult."

Cultural context

"Some people can't see past the end of their own nose," said Mary Poppins. Wise woman. Yes, students are rightfully concerned about how an exclusivity deal might interfere with our daily routine. There are other issues however - oft-neglected but critical socio-political concerns.

Sure, we can always theoretically quench our thirst off campus. Obviously the drink won't be literally forced down anyone's throat. But is that the main issue at stake?

Some students argue that the real issue is not one of individual rights, but of collective responsibility. Andrea Schmidt, co-coordinator of the QPIRG Corporate Watch working group, argues that some focus should shift from immediate, personal rights to "collective moral or ethical responsibility that we, as the McGill student body bear - or ought to." She points out that the SSMU is an association that represents us as a collectivity, not as individuals.

Several issues stir controversy here: First, increasing corporatization of campus and privatization of education. Second, direction of our consumer dollars. Finally, repercussions of the process on student democracy.

It's common to tune out buzzwords such as

"corporatization" and "privatization." The recent passing of the MSF referendum may indicate that many students have already accepted these trends as a new way of life. Today, our campus is not corporate-free by any strain of the imagination. Many of McGill's Board of Governors members are CEOs of corporations. We have numerous other contracts - banking services, office supplies - that could be labeled "exclusive." But critics contend that, just because corporate presence is already heavy, it doesn't mean it's a trend we should propagate. These students dislike the idea of selling a corporation rights to our campus, subsequently branding ourselves with that corporate name. "Their product becomes representative of our student body as a group," says Schmidt, "and a relatively affluent - hence powerful - soon-to-be influential group, at that."

Privatization is becoming an official consideration for McGill. Funding from sources such as student fees and corporations seems at times necessary to maintain McGill's quality. PGSS, in contrast, maintains that education is a governmental responsibility. "For every penny we get from elsewhere we're telling the government that cuts are OK," says president Bryan Chung, stressing the importance of remaining a public institution with public funding.

These cola deals are on a larger scale than previous supplier deals. The soft drink market is worth \$54 billion annually in the U.S. alone. Colas are a colossal business, and students are among their major targets. With this in mind, exclusivity deals are seen by some as a way to squeeze money out of the corporations. In general, Pederzani says, the corporations enter these agreements reluctantly, "because the amount of money they give to the campus in returns is so much less than in exclusivity."

One reason cola companies sign the deals is the belief that consumers get hooked during their younger years. Commenting on a recent Hour article, EUS Councilor Phil Gohier says Spectrum "doesn't even hide the fact that brainwashing is one of the principal goals of such contracts." Gohier also argues that, by sign-

"The university will need a better excuse than new barbells for forcing us to drink a single syrupy slop for ten years; for shrouding their deal in a confidentiality clause that compromises our status as a public institution; for forcing intelligent, educated students to overlook their knowledge of Pepsi and Coke's scurrilous records." - student letter to U of T Varsity

ing such a long-term deal, we will place an undesirable burden on incoming students "until kids who are currently in grade 3 are entering McGill...The 'Thou shalt only have one God: Pepsi' ideology shouldn't be part of the baggage of entering McGill as a student."

Another motivation for companies is that, with increased commissions, some schools themselves promote beverage sales. U of T students worry that a minimum sales quota will be a precondition for the money. One school district holds contests by wrapping a \$100 bill around a pop can in their vending machine. Commercialization of campuses is exaggerated, Pederzani argues. "You don't walk in and see the banners hanging everywhere. All you see are the vending machines."

Condoning corporate practice

By introducing a campus-wide monopoly, do we implicitly endorse a corporation and its sometimes disturbing practices? McGill students have acted on these concerns previously, passing a 1996 referendum condemning Pepsi's operations in Burma. We were among others responding to an international boycott call against PepsiCo. A similar incident has occurred more recently with Coke in Nigeria.

Sameer Dossani, a Corpwatch member, is concerned about how exclusivity will affect students' ability to work for social justice, for example, through another boycott. "Any action we could take to limit the company's access to McGill would be limited," he says, "because the company had

already guaranteed itself access to McGill through the contract." Mike Leitold, in a recent letter to the Tribune, seems to agree with this consequence of the exclusivity deal: "In an era where our dollar is our vote, such a decision would imply that we too support the present-day 'dubious' dealings of Coca-Cola."

Pederzani adds another dimension to the debate, saying "I understand the concern that these companies have had a stained past. And that is a legitimate concern. However, you are also in a situation where they have pretty much a duopoly in the world." A representative at the North Pole Beverages (NPB) Montreal office, who didn't want his name revealed, confirms this unfortunate scenario. "Pepsi and Coke control 85% of the Canadian market," he says. The other 15% are small suppliers who supply non-urban corner stores. NPB's product is a health beverage known as "E=mc2" and because Pepsi sees little demand for healthy beverages, their company gets limited distribution. NPB has no choice but to use Pepsi as their distributor, however. Coke and Pepsi's "slotting allowances" - millions of dollars paid to supermarkets and convenience stores (analogous to the millions for McGill) - have bought all available shelf space.

Reid Allaway, of the Namby-Pamby Positive Action Committee, says "we should use the McGill market to further Canadian or even Montreal or Quebec economies," rather than siphon our money into huge, U.S. based, multinational corporations. As consumers, he argues, we should

exercise our position to gain terms from suppliers that reflect our priorities, rather than remain at the mercy of the supplier's decisions.

McGill doesn't act in a vacuum. The controversy over exclusivity rights may be viewed in the context of today's escalating corporate dominance. Private corporations now have an unprecedented level of control over markets, governments and even mass media. Georges Fernandes, India's industry minister in the late 1970s, banished Coca-Cola from the country for violating investment laws. The local beverage industry, which he was trying to protect, has since been taken over by Coke and Pepsi. As he describes in the *Multi-national Monitor*, his experience with corporate power since has taught him "first, how they can bribe people at the highest levels of government. Second, how they can use the media and manipulate the media. Third, how they can rough you up... All this talk of competition is okay, but this competition is like asking me to take on a Japanese sumo wrestler."

The SSMU Financial Ethics Research Committee has a mandate to investigate the ethical nature of a company's business practices, advising on deals either over \$15,000 or on request of a student. Questioned about whether the FERC has researched and/or made recommendations on this beverage deal, committee member Hannah Parish responds, "as I'm sure you can appreciate the delicate nature of what FERC does, I'm sure you can understand why I can't answer those questions."

Corporatocracy

One of the greatest dangers of corporate control is the threat to autonomy. At schools with exclusive beverage agreements, questions arise about freedom of expression. In one incident, a Georgia high school suspended a student for wearing a Pepsi shirt on Coke Day and refusing to remove it for a photo. Closer to home, two York University students who displayed anti-Pepsi banners at a school football game were asked leave and later received letters of reprimand. Campus editors at York have been approached to, for example,



age contract itself. One concern is a confidentiality clause that has been invoked by most, if not all, other signing universities. After details of their school's 1995 deal were kept confidential, the University of British Columbia student paper, *The Ubyyssey*, filed a

Freedom of Information

request. In declining the request, the commissioner referred to "very persuasive" concealed in-camera statements made by Coke and UBC. "When a university cannot be open with its financial deals," said Ramsaroop, "it infringes on its duty to be an accountable public institution." Pederzani assured that students will certainly see the contract they sign. A technicality is that "the contract" is in two parts: one between McGill University and the beverage company, and a second between McGill and participating campus groups.

Some say it is "realistic" for universities to adapt to decreased governmental funding. A realist understands that these are "hard times" and that during these hard times, we can't afford to set our principles too high. But do we have to accept this picture of "reality"? We seem to make these decisions on the premise that we have no choice. However, we do have a choice - a collective choice that will affect the individual choices we are able to make in the future.

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Dalhousie's Harassment Policy Questioned

BY KATIE TINKER

HALIFAX (CUP) — Dalhousie University is feeling the heat as some critics say changes to the school's sexual harassment policy place too much power in the hands of administrators.

Until recently, members of the Dalhousie community who wished to make a formal harassment complaint could turn to an independent panel that reviewed the situation and decided whether disciplinary action was required. If the panel ruled in favour of action, the case would be passed on to the administrator in charge of the perpetrator.

But under recent changes to the university's sexual harassment policy, the independent panel no longer exists. Now, complainants must go directly to the administrator.

Law professor Jennifer Bankier says removing the independent hearing places too much power in the hands of administrators, who may not fully understand harassment cases or feel like dealing with them.

"Often the [person handling the complaint] doesn't get the issue," Bankier said.

"There was one famous case, where the dean was of the old school, and he and the [accused] simply agreed that there was no problem. The complainant and the sexual harassment officer thought there was a problem, but they couldn't do anything about it," she added.

Although the independent panel didn't have the power to make any final decision, Bankier says it was valuable because it presented a neutral assessment of the situation, which helped ensure the complaint was handled fairly throughout the process.

"You really need some independent party to look at the issue so that it doesn't simply get swept under the rug. Now, the only independent mechanism we had has been eliminated," she said.

Susan Brousseau, Dalhousie's sexual harassment officer, disagrees.

She says the independent hear-

ing only prolonged the process of lodging formal complaints, even though in the end, cases still ended up where they do now: before the administrative head.

Even without the independent panel, Brousseau says, complainants are still protected against a biased or hostile process.

"They have the same rights of appeal that they would have with any other problem handled by the administration," she said.

Lynn McIntyre, dean of health professions, agrees the old policy was inefficient and says it stifled complaints.

"[It] required the person making the complaint to repeatedly tell their story," McIntyre said. "People were discouraged... because it was such a long, onerous procedure."

Still, McIntyre acknowledges the new policy isn't perfect. But she says if there are any major problems with the revisions, they will be revealed and hopefully corrected over a six-month consultation period.

ASEF Passed Without Bylaws to Govern it

(continued from front page)

But Rein maintained that another push for the bylaws at the next meeting would be unethical.

"It was definitive that the councilors did not vote in favour of the bylaws as they stood. That doesn't mean that they didn't want the work-study program. Likewise, the students were voting on a motion that sounded

good, but didn't say how the laws would govern it and didn't show that the vast majority of students didn't qualify simply because of economic standing."

Rein also believed that the question was unclear and that the electorate was ill-informed.

"I don't think that it was disseminated very well. I think that the motion question itself was

misleading as was the campaigning for it," he said.

Wojtek Baraniak, Arts Representative to SSMU and a voting councilor to AUS, attributed the entire ordeal to an ill-informed council.

"I think the problem ultimately is that the AUS council and the people who conduct the meetings do not know the rules."

NEWS BRIEF

SSMU Execs Got a Raise?

A poster campaign alleging that SSMU executives had increased their stipends to \$19 000 a year has been called a farce by SSMU leaders.

"It's totally unfounded," said SSMU President Duncan Reid.

Currently, the five members of the SSMU executive earn around \$15000 a year.

"I am the lowest paid full-time President of a student association," said Reid. "There are a lot of schools in Ontario that pay their presidents up to \$30000."

At last Thursday's SSMU council meeting, a motion was passed disapproving of the "dishonest actions of the individu-

als propagating false information regarding SSMU executives' stipends."

Reid said that he had received some angry phone calls about the rumour.

"Many students believed this," he said.

It is still unknown who organized the poster campaign.

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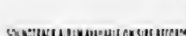
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CEGEP Students Occupy Government Offices

DAY-LONG ORDEAL ENDS WITH ULTIMATUM TO EDUCATION MINISTRY

BY DASHA

MERKUSHEVA

"We stand against politicians for mobilizing all students to protect our rights ... student solidarity, like in the 1960s," said a student, last Tuesday, at the office of Publications du Quebec.

He was among one of five groups of students occupying various locations in Montreal, Sherbrooke and Joliette. In Montreal, students took over the Publications du Quebec offices, the office of the educational minister Louise Harel and the office of the Vice-Rector of Université de Montreal.

The occupations were organized by the Quebec component of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS-Q) and by the Mouvement pour le Droit à l'Education (MDE). Both organizations united CEGEP and university students, totaling over 55 thousand members. Only CEGEP students took part in the occupations—no McGill students were involved.

It all started at mid-afternoon when groups of students loaded buses at St. Laurent and Maisonneuve CEGEPs and left to occupy secret locations. Over three hundred students were armed only with the determinacy to make themselves heard by the Quebec government.

According to CFS, about a hundred students occupied the Publications du Quebec office at Complexe Desjardins. Police reports stated that students walked into the office and calmly asked the employees to leave.

After that students barricaded themselves in and covered the windows from the inside with posters and banners. The ultimatum posted by students to the provincial government read, "We, students, demand major changes to our education system and are willing to take all the necessary actions to obtain satisfaction (occupations, widespread civil disobedience, an unlimited general strike, etc.)"

The demands of the protesters included the increase in the funding of the education, abolition of student debt and further reforms in the democratization of the post-secondary institutions.

Failing that, students threatened, governments can look forward to a general strike and mobilizations reminiscent of the 1960's.

"Not only do we have to pay more, but we get less education because there are fewer and fewer teachers," said the same anonymous CEGEP student, alluding to his disappointment with the recent provincial budget, which he said, did nothing to combat rising costs for students and loss of funds.

"Teachers don't get paid enough ... and they leave," he said.

"The future goal at which we should aim is free education for all and we can't allow for any more fee increases," added CEGEP student, Thomas Chiasson.

Just as the protesters barricaded themselves in, the police arrived and stayed at the scene without doing a thing. They did not even know what the students were protesting against.

Sgt. Beaulé speculated: "They are against school fees going up, probably." He, as well as his fellow officers claimed that students didn't establish good communications and he was not aware of any negotiations going on.

But, in actuality, students never stopped negotiating with the government via a phone. After a whole day on the phone, the students were satisfied with having delivered their ultimatum.

Initially planned as solely a warning to the provincial government, the event threatened to grow into a longer saga at one point, with students planning to occupy the offices and CEGEPs until their demands were met. Yet, in the evening, the occupiers were satisfied with their achievements to that point.

"They [occupations] ended as students voluntarily decided to leave, with no trouble and no arrests," said CFS-Q coordinator Benoît Renaud.

The next event in the CFS-Q and MDE agendas to actualize is a demo-parade scheduled to start at 2 p.m. at Concordia University March 31st, Wednesday.

Barriers and Bonfires

STUDENT GROUPS AT ODDS OVER EDUCATION

FUNDING DEMANDS

(continued from front page)

But Feiner was quick to defend the SSMU's stake in the FEUQ-affiliated event. "The SSMU would never work with a young PQ organization," he said. SSMU, despite its decision to support Wednesday's rally and its role as a FEUQ founder, gave up membership after a 1993 student referendum and decided not to rejoin following La FEUQ's announcement of a sovereignty mandate before the 1994 provincial election.

Feiner was even more disappointed that the event was soured by the resistance when some of the anti-protesters began throwing barricade rails at the speakers' stage, and burning the ralliers placards in a large street bonfire.

"They decided that our demands did not go far enough," said Feiner. "But I don't think it's an intelligent way of communicating a message. It's detrimental to the movement to take on violent, factional tactics," he added.

"Right now, there is a division in the student movement. La FEUQ and CFS have never seen eye-to-eye," Feiner said.

And while the anti-demonstrators staked a claim that the larger demo was not going far enough, the prevailing sentiment at the rally was that the message being sent to the government was a strong one.

Among the key demands being made at the rally were those for student assistance program reforms and reinvestment in education by the federal and provincial government, particularly following the most recent budgets announced at both levels which Feiner says, hardly met the needs of Quebec schools.

"The government needs to commit more of its budgetary surplus," he said, suggesting that funding should be put towards students needs for grant-based, not loan-based assistance as well as institutions' needs for renovations.

Also at stake was the status of the federally-funded \$1 billion Millennium Scholarship Fund which the Liberals have touted since last year's budget as the

heart of their education reinvestment initiatives. At the top of the rally's list of demands was one that Quebec's share of the billion be injected directly into the province's financial aid system, instead of being doled in the form of scholarships that some have said would reach no more than 5 per cent of students.

Handling of the Fund was recently passed on to a private foundation headed by Bell Canada Chairman and CEO, Jean Monty. Wednesday's rally culminated in front of Bell Canada's downtown Tower, where Monty keeps his office.

And if demands surrounding the Fund made it seem like federal policy makers had topped the ralliers hit list, the students were not about to turn another cheek to abuse dished out at the provincial level in the form of insufficient loan portability, the allowance of differential fee structures, and major bureaucratic overspending.

"Our education is suffering because the bureaucracy is siphoning away so much of the money that should be going to services," noted McGill U1 Pre-Med student, Elizabeth Krakow. "We have a Ministry that is 30% larger than Ontario's and they have more population," she added.

Opposition to differential tuition fees marked one of the more surprising stances in the united front mobilization, though Feiner was met by a less than enthusiastic response from the ralliers when during his speech, he seized the opportunity to make another cry in SSMU's ongoing public and in-court campaign against differential fees for out-of-province students.

But the Coalition Étudiante Montréal-Métropolitain (CEMM) officially threw its support behind the anti-differential fee stance. The umbrella issue of the government's stance on inter-provincial mobility, they said, is just as hurtful to native Quebecers wishing to study out-of-province, for whom loan portability is restricted.

And emotions aren't only running high at the post-secondary level. Thousands of CEGEP students joined in the rally, adding to its set of demands the abolishment of a Failure Fee that sees students who fail more than two courses pay.

"If [the provincial government] keeps up with this bullshit, programs like ours will cease to exist altogether," said a teacher from a New School program at Dawson College, who attended the rally with a number of his students from the school's video production program. "It's a very small class that probably won't exist in two years if they keep up the cut-backs," he said.

But the fact that so many students were able to gather in a united front, he says, is more than a little encouraging. "You read the mainstream press and these students are supposed to be so apathetic and don't give a shit about anything. Well hey, these are not apathetic people," he said, looking over the thousands gathered.

In addition to the Montreal march, a Quebec city rally boasted 3,000 more students marching to the National Assembly.

Organizers of last Tuesday's CFS occupations and the demo-parade on the 31st that will feature street theatre puppet shows, and culminate in a march from Concordia's Hall Building to a park near UQAM, are hopeful that their event will enjoy as much response.

They plan to highlight demands for governments' reinvestment, Millennium Fund dollars invested directly in the financial aid program, as well as a number of other initiatives focusing on bursaries in lieu of loans, privatization concerns, and student poverty.

Asked if SSMU, who does not hold membership in CFS, plans to support the event, Feiner said that if the focus included reinvestment, he imagined it would have SSMU support. "But if the event includes the same action as in the counter-demonstration [that happened on Wednesday], we can't support it," he said.



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Monday, March 29, 1999

The McGill Daily 13

Political Correctness is dead

BY MELINA HOFFMAN

ACADEMICS SEND THE TERM TO THE DUSTBIN OF HISTORY

Political correctness is certainly one of the most used and abused terms in contemporary thought. Last Monday, however, it was better than vanquished — it was hurdled.

The leap was taken by Canadian academics gathered at a panel discussion entitled "Beyond Political Correctness." Nathalie Cooke, a panelist from McGill's English department, succinctly articulated her reasons for wanting to move away from PC. She said, "Political Correctness brings to mind the firm and distant handshakes of those one expects to meet seldom and only on dress-up days."

There were also theoretical complaints levied against PC. For example, the very idea that there is just one way to be correct is one of the myths George S. Dei, the most revolutionary speaker on the panel, wants to rupture. He was the last speaker of a lineup of four speakers that, presumably by mere coincidence, went in order of least to most controversial.

Enoch Padolsky, of the Carleton English department, kicked off the panel with a dose of optimism. His view on the possibility of an inclusive Canadian canon was that "what was once a modest proposal may become reality in the next fif-

teen years." Following him was Professor Cooke's computer-image illustrated comparison of multiculturalism to cookbooks. She showed how the contents of cookbooks have moved away from Sunday dinner, Wonder bread and manners manuals to a more eclectic variety. Cooke then extended the analogy of a wider palette to people's tastes in methodology saying that "today I don't think you flinch to see cookbooks as shifts in cultural taste and philosophy."

After the two English professors came Richard Janda, a McGill law professor, and fewer feel-good vibes. As he said, "I'm not pessi-

mistic, but practical, given that the backdrop of PC continues to impede openness and sophistication with which universities undertake discussion." He is a self-admitted bureaucrat with, as his talk was titled, "commitment to issue of equity." He expressed a note of sadness as he said that "the idea of educational equity gets more lip-service than anything else." The contrast between the idea of equality and the realities of implementation was sadly illustrated by the drop in cheerfulness between Cooke and Janda.

Professor Dei, from University of Toronto, also spoke more about what needed to be done than what already had been achieved. His honesty, though at some points brutal, was well in keeping with the theme of the panel. He certainly did not engage the "intellectual gymnastics around race" that he acknowledged PC has caused. The main message from his talk was a list of myths that need to be ruptured. The underlying one is the idea that there is

one true way of knowing. Dei called for "multiple centres of knowledge" to be recognized as equally valid because, as he put it "We need to get away from the Eurocentric hierarchical view of difference."

He may have received his wish on Monday, for despite their differences in opinion, the panelists maintained a forward-looking commitment and a positive attitude towards each other. This is in marked contrast to such debates in the United States, where PC has taken on the characteristics of a defended orthodoxy. As Leonard Moore, a professor from California at McGill's History department said, "In Canada the problems aren't as deep."

The mediator of the panel, Morton Weinfeld, also commented that on this side of the border a "certain civility is maintained." The tone of the panel shows more than anything that the touchy terminology and do blethink of PC had, at least for the day, been left behind.

Ontario Liberals join NDP in vow to lower tuition

BY RACHEL FUREY AND DEREK CHEZZI

TORONTO (CUP) — As Ontario gears up for a provincial election, expected to be called this spring, opposition parties are already making promises — and education issues have caught their eye.

Like the New Democratic Party, Ontario's Liberal Party has vowed to roll back tuition fees by 10 per cent if it forms the next government.

But Liberals remain coy about how much of the Tories' deregulation scheme they would rescind.

Speaking at York University last Monday, Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty said his government would decrease tuition by 10 per cent, allow part-time students access to Ontario student loans and increase the amount a student can earn while using student loans from \$600 to \$1,800.

McGuinty also pledged to foot the education bill for medical students who agree to practice for five years in an under-serviced area.

"Something is slipping away from Ontario," he said. "I'm critical of all governments, even my predecessor, for letting the priority of post-secondary education slide."

The Canadian Federation of Students applauded the Liberals' plan to cut tuition and took partial credit for it.

"Today's commitment by the Liberals to roll back tuition by 10 per cent is a sign that CFS's call to reduce student debt is getting heard," stated Joel Harden, Ontario's CFS chair.

Added Dawn Palin, president of the York Federation of Students, "They are beginning to address some of the concerns students have been saying."

But others weren't impressed by the proposed fee reduction. "All

they really promised was to bring it back to the point of a year ago," said York University student Jesse Black-Allen.

And even with the Liberals saying they will cut tuition fees, student leaders aren't yet celebrating. The party hasn't made a firm commitment on whether it would alter the deregulation of tuition fees announced by the Progressive Conservative government last year.

The decision opened the door for universities and colleges to set their own fees for professional and graduate programs, resulting in tuition fee hikes of up to 400 per cent for some programs.

"We want to see the Liberals come out strongly against... [deregulation of tuition fees] and then, from that point, talk about a 10 per cent roll back," Harden said.

While he won't commit to a fee reduction of more than 10 per cent, Liberal Member of Parliament, David Caplan, said his party would be involved in setting tuition fee levels.

"[A Liberal government] would make sure that undergraduate, second-entry and graduate programs are affordable and accessible," Caplan said.

After McGuinty's appearance at York University last week, the Tories questioned where the Liberals will get the \$155 million needed to implement their education plans.

"At least the NDP has explained how they would pay [for the tuition fee roll back]," said Rob Savage, spokesman for Education Minister Dave Johnson. "There's been no indication [from the Liberals] of where they would get the money."

But Caplan said the money is available, citing the province's recent spending splurge on advertising.

"The government's advertising figure is \$100 million of taxpayers money; that's two-thirds of the amount we need [to roll back tuition fees by 10 per cent]," Caplan said.

The Liberals' education platform echoes that unveiled by New Democrats last October, when they too promised to cut tuition fees by 10 per cent.

The NDP also plans to invest more money in research at colleges and universities, and return fees for deregulated programs to their levels before the Tories lifted provincial caps on graduate and professional programs.

At a different meeting with York University students earlier this month, Ontario NDP leader Howard Hampton condemned the Conservatives' for rapidly decreasing government support for post-secondary education.

"We have to have public investment in education. Private investment is not enough," Hampton said.

The NDP says it will finance its education and other policies by reversing Ontario's tax cut for people making more than \$80,000.

As for education promises being made by Premier Mike Harris' Tories — who are still far ahead in the polls — they plan to extend deregulation to other programs like undergraduate computer science and engineering.

"Students should pay their fair share," Savage said. "We want quality education and a healthy economy."

HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS

MARCH 27 (NO MASS)
MEAL OF THE POOR
6 PM

RECONCILIATION SERVICE & CONFESSIONS
7-9 PM

MARCH 28
PALM SUNDAY
PILGRIMAGE TO ST. JOSEPH'S ORATORY
MASS AT 12:30 PM

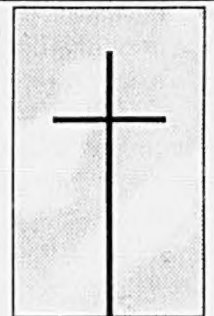
APRIL 1
HOLY THURSDAY
8 PM

APRIL 2
GOOD FRIDAY
ECUMENICAL SERVICE
1 PM

APRIL 3
PASCAL VIGIL
9 PM

APRIL 4
EASTER SUNDAY
SUNRISE SERVICE ON MT-ROYAL,
5:15 AM

ALSO,
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